

# Latest from ACER international offices

ACER works through its international offices to deliver a diverse range of results-oriented projects. They are often implemented in partnership with global and local development partners with the goal to advance education outcomes and improve learning.

## ACER INDONESIA

### Modelling universal pre-primary education

ACER Indonesia is working on a study of early childhood education in Bogor District, West Java, supported by UNICEF Indonesia and the IKEA Foundation. Under this project, ACER collected data from 620 children aged 5–6 in 20 sub-districts. The study was carried out as a continuation of the baseline study conducted by ACER Indonesia in 2017–18.

### Technical trials for introducing ACER assessment tools

ACER Indonesia is getting ready to launch ACER assessments including Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) and International Benchmark Tests (IBT) in Indonesia. A number of technical trials have been conducted in partnership with school associations and local governments. These assessments will be linked to Indonesia's national curriculum.

### Encouraging knowledge-sharing on assessments

A series of knowledge sharing sessions and public lectures reaching out to more than 650 people including teachers, university students and lecturers, and education practitioners have been conducted by ACER Indonesia. Expert researchers from across ACER offices delivered these sessions in Indonesia. ACER Indonesia collaborated with government bodies, teacher

associations, school associations, teaching universities and education communities.

## ACER INDIA

### Strengthening systemic capacity on learning assessment

Supported by UNICEF India, ACER India is conducting a project to strengthen capacity at the state level by building a robust and responsive learning assessment system that yields reliable data to inform educational policy. The project will build capacities of key officials in the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) and Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to implement assessments that gauge progress in learning and generate data for improvements in policy, planning and pedagogical practice. The states covered include Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh.

### Reforming learning assessments in Chhattisgarh

Strengthening Learning Assessment Capacities is a new joint project that aims to reform classroom learning by improving assessment and data collection practices. Supported by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Government of Chhattisgarh and UNICEF, the program targets improvement of both classroom

assessments and standardised testing, and teacher workshops are already underway. The project's first phase focuses on the development of standardised instruments for grades 4, 6 and 7 by directly involving teachers in the creation of test items. Phase two concentrates on building the capacity of teachers to initiate the development of high-quality item banks for school-based assessments.

### Research grant to analyse IELTS reading strategies

Under a research grant from the British Council, ACER India will analyse the reading strategies of International English Language Testing System (IELTS) takers from linguistically diverse backgrounds in India. A rigorous mixed research methodology will be employed to gather quantitative and qualitative data on the cognitive and metacognitive strategies used by test takers for whom Hindi, Punjabi and Telugu are first languages.

### Knowledge platform on learning assessments

ACER India has collaborated with Community Systems Foundation, USA, to establish a South Asian knowledge platform on learning assessments for the UNICEF Regional Office in South Asia (ROSA). The platform will facilitate knowledge sharing on learning assessment and host relevant content to inform teaching and learning.



## ACER MALAYSIA

### Collaborative partnership to strengthen educational research

In 2018, ACER Malaysia's inaugural year, it formed a collaborative partnership with Emerging Markets Innovative Research (EMIR), a local independent research organisation tasked to provide evidence-based recommendation for policy reform across government agencies. The research collaboration focuses on the evaluation of existing policy and programs and provides recommendations in meeting the targets of the Malaysian Education Blueprint, primarily in three areas – quality and equity of education, bridging the gap in STEM education, and Indigenous education.

### Development of high quality item bank

The Ministry of Education (MoE), in line with the aim 'to enculturate Higher Order Thinking Skills' of the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013–2025, has begun an initiative to build capacity in development of high quality diagnostic assessments across four key domains scientific literacy, mathematical literacy, reading and financial literacy.

It will begin with teacher training on item development followed by creation of an item bank that teachers can use to assess student progress in critical thinking and problem-solving. The Ministry aims to develop high quality items reflecting the style of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). ACER Malaysia, in collaboration with the Performance and Delivery Unit, is providing recommendations to the MoE in preparation for a national teacher training program, as well as quality assurance for the items developed by the Ministry.

## ACER UAE

### Implementing TIMSS 2019

ACER UAE is implementing the TIMSS 2019 main study for the Ministry of Education (MOE). Internationally, TIMSS is recognised as an effective evidence-based assessment of Grade 4 and 8 students in mathematics and science. Along with Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and PISA, the UAE places TIMSS at the core of its education development goals. The implementation is aligned with the national agenda and the MOE's aim to have the UAE ranked in the top 15 countries for TIMSS by 2021. TIMSS also provides background data that informs policymakers to develop and implement policies that support the improvement of teaching and learning.

### Rolling out PISA-based tests for schools

ACER UAE is accredited by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as the national service provider for the PISA for Schools Project. The Ministry of Education appointed ACER UAE to implement the PISA-based tests for schools across the UAE. The schools are encouraged to use the results to support their school improvement effort and benchmark their performance based on the common PISA scale. At the school level, it empowers teachers with student performance data, including data on the background variables unique to each school.

### Supporting school improvement in Sharjah

ACER UAE has been awarded a contract for School Improvement Services by the Sharjah Private Education Authority. The program has four components – leadership development, continuous professional

learning for teachers, review of practices within schools to help embed a culture of continuous school improvement and collaboration at all levels within a school using ACER's School Improvement Tool. The Authority is committed to creating an innovative system of review and feedback to schools through the development of a secure online portal.

## ACER UK

### More than 600 000 SNSA assessments completed

In August 2017, the Scottish Government commissioned ACER to develop and deliver the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) as part of the National Improvement Framework. More than 600 000 assessments have since been completed by children and young people in P1, P4, P7, and S3 year groups. The results provide teachers with objective, comparable diagnostic information about progress, which will help improve outcomes for all children and young people.

### Evaluating the impact of teaching assistants

The Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA) program aims to develop strategies so that teaching assistants can improve student outcomes by working in a whole class setting. RAND Europe has commissioned ACER UK to evaluate the impact of MITA to ensure teaching assistants' resources are appropriately targeted in the classroom and school. ACER's Essential Learning Metrics (ELMs) assessments are used as baseline and outcome measures in the study. The intervention program has been developed by University College London.